

STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SUPPLEMENTARY READER

ENGLISH

STANDARD 6

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

1993

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PREFACE

Children love stories. They like to listen to stories and also to retell them to make others happy. When they learn to read, they are able to read many stories which will instruct as well as delight them. As their imagination develops they start making stories of their own; and thus they learn to use language effectively and imaginatively.

Competence in the use of language is gained through wide reading. This is made possible by providing children with interesting reading material. The stories in this book have been retold in familiar language to motivate children to read more and more. These stories contain ideas which can promote the educational and imaginative development of children.

The exercises are so designed as to develop the language skills of children in an interesting way. Teachers may aim at a good deal of 'whole class' teaching. At the same time pair and group work can be attempted in the case of certain activities. Strategies such as reading aloud, answering questions, acting of dialogues, transferring of dialogues to real-life situations, listening and repeating, silent reading by the whole class before answering the comprehension questions, discussion of points raised, describing of situations, commenting on characters and rewriting the various anecdotes in the story in simple language with variations suggested by the teacher may be attempted in the classroom besides assigning work to be done by children on their own. The language used in these stories will not be too difficult for most children. However, they should be encouraged to guess the meaning of items which they do not know or may have forgotten.

State Institute of Education
Trivandrum
10th January, 1988

*Commissioner for Educational
Development & Research*

PREFACE

Children love stories. They like to listen to stories and also to tell them to make others happy. When they learn to read they are able to read many stories which will interest as well as delight them. As their imagination develops they want reading matter of their own; and then they have to use language effectively and imaginatively.

Compromises in the use of language is gained through wide reading. This is made possible by providing children with interesting reading material. The stories which have been selected for this book are in modern English to meet the needs and taste. These stories contain ideas which can be used in the educational and imaginative development of children.

The exercises are so arranged as to develop the language skills of children in an interesting way. Teachers can give a good deal of work class reading. At the same time each child must be able to do something in the case of certain exercises. Stories such as reading aloud, answering questions, making of character, drawing in pictures, to make an account, talking and reporting, when reading by the whole class before answering the comprehension questions, discussion of picture, drawing of characters, comparing on characters and writing the various incidents in the story in simple language with various suggested by the teacher may be attempted in the classroom. Each language work to be done by children on their own. The language used in these stories will not be too difficult for most children. However, they should be encouraged to give the meaning of items which they do not know or may have forgotten.

State Institute of Education
Tanjore
10th January 1955

Commissioner for Educational
Tamil Nadu

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1 THE KING AND THE FARMER

Once there lived a king. He was the ruler of a small kingdom. He was very kind to his people. He loved them very much. So [he worked for their happiness.] They were happy under his rule.

The king often went round his kingdom to know his people's sorrows. [He heard their complaints¹ and helped them to be happy.] So the people loved and respected him.



¹ complaints : statements of dissatisfaction

One day the king was passing through a village.² He saw an old man³ there. The old man was a farmer.³ He was planting a mango tree in front of his hut.³ The king stopped to talk to him.

The king asked, "How old are you?"⁴ The farmer answered, "Sir, today is my eighty-fifth birthday. I wish to do something useful; that is why I'm planting this mango tree. I hate to be idle⁵."

"How long will the tree take to bear⁴ fruit?" asked the king. The farmer answered, "It will take at least ten years to bear fruit."

The farmer then said, "Sir, please look at those trees over there. I did not plant them there. My forefathers⁵ planted them. I eat their fruit. In the same way I am planting this tree for ^{his} my children and grandchildren.⁶ I won't be selfish⁶. I shall work for others too."

The king was very happy to hear the old man's words. He said to him, "The country needs more men like you. Take this money. It is yours. You have earned⁷ it by your selfless⁸ work."

He gave the old man a small bag of money.⁸ There were a hundred and fifty silver coins in it.

³ idle : not willing to work; lazy

⁴ bear : produce

⁵ forefathers : ancestors

⁶ selfish : greedy

⁷ earned : gained by working

⁸ selfless : unselfish

The farmer thanked the king and said, "Sir, on the very first day my tree has given me a hundred and fifty silver mangoes. If God is kind, I shall live to eat the fruit of this tree too." 9

The king went back home. He sent for his Chief Minister and told him about the old farmer. He said, "We can learn a lesson from him. Our country needs many more selfless workers like him." 11

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 What did the king do to make his people happy?
- 2 Whom did the king see one day?
- 3 What was the man doing in front of his hut?
- 4 What did the king ask the farmer?
- 5 What did the farmer reply?
- 6 Who planted the trees from which the farmer got fruits? His father
- 7 How many years will this tree take to bear fruit? ten years
- 8 What did the king give the farmer?
- 9 What did the farmer say to the king after taking the bag from him?
- 10 For whom was the farmer planting the tree?
- 11 What did the king say to his Chief Minister?

II Complete the sentences choosing the best item from those given:

- 1 The king went round his kingdom because
 - (a) he wanted to see places.
 - (b) he wanted to help people.
 - (c) he wanted to meet farmers.
- 2 The farmer was
 - (a) a hard-working man.
 - (b) a selfish man.
 - (c) a lazy man.

- 3 The king was very happy to hear that
- (a) the old man wouldn't be selfish.
 - (b) the old man wouldn't die soon.
 - (c) the old man wouldn't accept the money.
- 4 From this lesson we learn that
- (a) we should cut down trees.
 - (b) we should plant trees for others.
 - (c) we should grow fruit trees.
- 5 The king gave money to the old man because
- (a) the old man was poor.
 - (b) the old man needed money for the farm.
 - (c) the king was pleased with the old man.
-

2 THE CLEVER COCK

Once there lived a farmer in a village. He lived in a hut at the foot of a mountain. He was not rich, but he was very happy.

1 [The farmer had a cow and an ox, a sheep and a goat and a cock and a hen.] He loved them and was kind to them all. They loved their master in return and worked for him gladly.

The farmer loved all the six but he loved the cock the best. He loved him so much because [the cock looked very beautiful with his red crown on.] 2 Everyone in the village liked him for his great beauty. The whole village was proud of the farmer's cock.

3 One morning the cock flew to a big tree near the farmer's hut and sat on a branch. 1 [The weather² was fine] and the cock was quite happy.

Soon a fox came that way and saw the cock on the tree. He thought, 4 [“That is a fine cock up there. I can deceive³ him and make him come down. I will catch him and eat him up. He will make a good dinner⁴ for me.”] 6

He looked up and said to the cock, “Good morning, friend. I am bringing you a piece of good news. You will be glad when you hear it.”

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|----------------------|--------------------------|
| ¹ branch | : limb of a tree |
| ² weather | : atmospheric conditions |
| ³ deceive | : play a trick on |
| ⁴ dinner | : main meal of the day |

"What is it?" asked the cock. The fox said, ²["The birds and animals have become friends from today. ⁷No animal will ever hurt a bird hereafter. Please come down. We shall play together."]

But ⁸the cock was clever and he knew the fox very well. ⁸He said, "This is a piece of good news indeed and I thank you for it. I will come down and we shall play together."

The fox was glad when he heard this and he waited for the cock to come down. He waited for a long time but the cock did not come down.

The fox became impatient⁵. He said to the cock, "Friend, I have been waiting here for a pretty long time. Please come down. We shall have a jolly⁶ time."



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- ⁵ impatient : not patient
⁶ jolly : merry

The cock replied, "I am waiting for those dogs to come here. They will be here in a few minutes and then we shall all play together."

The fox became afraid when he heard this. He left the cock and ran away. The cock laughed loudly when he saw this. He shouted to the fox, "Why are you running away from the dogs now? They won't harm you."

But the fox did not stop. He ran and was soon out of danger. He thought, "I will catch the cock some day and kill him and eat him up. He is a proud cock."

One afternoon the cock went into the farmer's garden and looked for insects⁷. The fox saw him and wanted to catch him. He ran into the garden and hid himself behind a tree. When the cock came close to him, the fox jumped



⁷ insects

: small animals like ant, fly etc.

upon him and caught him by the neck. Then he ran away from that place with the cock in his mouth.

When the farmer's wife saw this, she shouted for help. The farmer heard her and ran after the fox. Soon his friends joined him and they all ran with sticks in their hands. They ran fast but the fox ran faster than they and left them far behind.

The cock was a clever bird. He wanted to escape from the fox and hit upon a plan. He said to the fox, "Why are those people running after you? I like you and I shall be with you. I don't want to go back to the farmer again. Will you please tell this to them?"

The fox was full of joy when he heard this. He thought, "What can those silly fellows do now? The cock likes me and will stay with me. I will tell them so." He opened his mouth to tell them this. At once the bird fell out of his mouth. Quickly the cock flew to the nearest tree and there he was quite safe.

The farmer and his friends were still running. When the cock saw them, he crowed loudly. The farmer saw the cock and was glad. The cock flew down and he took him home. Everyone in the village felt happy when they saw the cock back again.

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 What did the farmer have?
- 2 Why was the farmer proud of his cock?
- 3 Where did the cock sit one day?
- 4 How was the weather?

- 5 Who saw the cock on the tree?
- 6 What did the fox say to himself?
- 7 What news did the fox tell the cock?
- 8 Why didn't the cock come down?
- 9 Why did the fox leave the cock and run away?
- 10 What happened to the cock when he was looking for insects in the garden?
- 11 What did the farmer's wife do when she saw the fox with the cock in his mouth?
- 12 What did the cock tell the fox in order to escape ?
- 13 What happened to the cock when the fox opened his mouth?
- 14 How did everyone in the village feel when they saw the cock back again?

II Say whether the following statements are True or False:

- 1 The farmer lived in a hut because he was poor.
 - 2 No one in the village liked the cock.
 - 3 The cock believed the fox and came down.
 - 4 The cock, the dogs and the fox played together.
 - 5 The fox carried the cock away.
 - 6 The farmer and his friends watched the fox.
 - 7 The farmer saw the cock when it flew down.
-

3 SHIBI AND THE DOVE

① Long long ago there lived in India a King called Shibi. He was a good king. He loved his people and worked for their good. He was very just. He ruled the country well. He treated the rich and the poor alike¹. In his kingdom everyone was happy. He cared only for what was right. He would not do an evil thing even to save his life. (Shibi's fame as a just king spread² far and wide³. It reached even the land of the gods.) The gods wondered whether the reports could be true. 80 They wanted to test him.

One day Yama and Indra came down to the earth to test Shibi. Yama took the shape of a dove and flew in the direction of Shibi's palace. Indra followed him in the form of a hawk⁴. Yama soon reached the palace. It was a beautiful palace made of marble and gold. At that time Shibi was walking in the garden. The dove came lower and lower. It then flew down to Shibi and fell at his feet. Shibi took the bird in his hands and examined it. He was happy to see that the bird was alive. The dove opened its eyes and said to the king, "O King! I am in danger. A terrible hawk is pursuing⁵ me. He will kill me." Will you protect⁶ me? Surely you will not

¹ alike : in the same way

² spread : reached

³ far and wide : everywhere

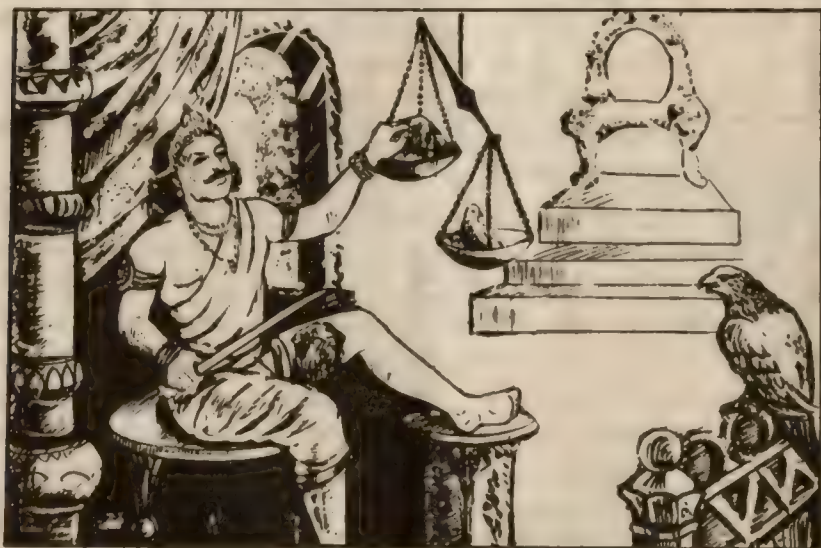
⁴ hawk : a kind of bird that eats other birds

⁵ pursue : go after in order to catch up with or kill

⁶ protect : guard; take care of

turn me over⁷ to the hawk, will you?" The king was surprised to hear these words. He never thought that doves could speak. He said to the bird: "It is my duty to protect the weak and the poor. No hawk will eat you. I will keep you from harm. This is a promise."

The King walked to the palace with the bird in his hands. A moment later the hawk arrived. It came down and stood before the King. It was a large grey bird. It had strong wings. Its beak⁸ was like a hook. Its talons⁹ were sharp like a knife. Its eyes burned with anger. It looked at the King and said: "Is this your justice? That bird in your hands is my food and you have stolen¹⁰ it. Wouldn't you be angry if someone



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|------------------------|------------------------------|
| ⁷ turn over | : hand over |
| ⁸ beak | : horny part of bird's mouth |
| ⁹ talon | : claw of a bird of prey |
| ¹⁰ stolen | : robbed (p. p. of steal) |

stole your food before you could eat it?" "But you will not starve¹¹," Shibi said. "You want food and I will give you food. I will give you any kind of food. Only you must let me keep this bird." The hawk replied: "But the food I want now is the flesh of that bird. It belongs¹² to me. You have no right to keep it." "It is my duty to protect the weak," the King said. "Please choose some other food. I will give you anything you want. What would you have instead of the bird?" The hawk replied: "That dove is my special food. Nothing can take its place. But if you will give me your own flesh to eat, I will let you have the bird. Give me as much of your flesh as the bird weighs. Do you agree?" The King thought for a moment. Then he said: "I agree. I will give you my flesh. The King asked ^{for a fight} a servant to bring a balance. When the balance was brought, he sat down on a stool and cut off a piece of flesh from his thigh¹³. He put it in one of the pans and put the dove in the other pan. ^{to} The dove weighed more. Shibi then cut off another piece of flesh and put it in the pan. But the balance showed that the dove was heavier. He cut off a lot more flesh and put it in the pan. Even then the flesh did not weigh equal to that of the dove. He cut off more and more of his flesh. But it was in vain. The dove was still heavier. Shibi said: "The dove cannot be heavier than myself. You can have the whole of me." So saying he took his sword in his hand and prepared to cut off his own head. Just then the dove and the hawk disappeared. The sword was changed into a garland, and it fell round his neck. The gods showed their happiness by showering flowers on Shibi.

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|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| ¹¹ starve | : go without food |
| ¹² belong | : be the property of |
| ¹³ thigh | : part of the leg from knee to hip |

Shibi saw two gods standing before him. One of them said: "O King! we are pleased with you." We are gods, and we were testing you. You have passed the test. We had heard a great deal about your kindness, justice and courage. Now we know that those reports were true. You are the kindest, the most just and the most courageous man on earth." With these words they departed¹⁴. A moment later Shibi found that his ¹² wounds had healed.

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 What kind of a king was Shibi?
- 2 Why did the gods want to test him?
- 3 Who came to test Shibi?
- 4 What did the dove tell the King?
- 5 What promise did the King give the dove?
- 6 What was the hawk like? *Why was it angry with the King?*
- 7 What did ^{the hawk} ask ^{the flesh of the king as the} for in place of the dove? How much did it demand? *as much as the bird weighs.*
- 8 What did the servant bring?
- 9 Where did Shibi cut the flesh from?
- 10 Why did he prepare to cut off his own head?
What happened to the sword then?
- 11 What did the gods say to Shibi?
- 12 What happened to his wounds?

II (a) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences:

- 1 Shibi treated the rich and the poor —————
- 2 Yama took the form of a ————— and Indra that of a —————
- 3 The hawk had ————— wings.
- 4 Shibi put a ————— in one of the pans.
- 5 ————— passed the test.

¹⁴ departed : went away

(b) *Say which of the following statements are False:*

- 1 The gods were jealous of Shibi.
 - 2 The King was surprised to hear the dove speak.
 - 3 The King protected the dove because he hated hawks.
 - 4 The King prepared to cut his own throat because of shame.
 - 5 The gods showered flowers on Indra and Yama.
-

4 LOST AND FOUND

Ravi was a blind boy. His cruel father sent him away from his home. So Ravi lived by begging. He had a little dog called Fido. The dog always helped the master. Ravi loved the dog very much.

One night Ravi and Fido were sleeping under a tree. Ravi had a dream. In his dream he saw a beautiful goddess. The goddess spoke softly, "Dear child, can you see me?" "No", said the boy. "I can't see you because I am blind."

"Poor little boy," the goddess said. "But don't be sad. I shall help you." "Can you give me my sight?" Ravi asked. "Can you really make me see?"



"No, I can't do that," answered the goddess. "But I can help you to help yourself. Every time you do a good action, a little light will come into your eyes. Every time you are kind to someone, you will be able to see a little better. But every time you are unkind or selfish, the light will go out again, and you will become blinder than you were before."

Ravi woke from his sleep. He felt happy. The dog Fido also looked happier that day. They both walked along the road. Then they heard an old man's voice. "Please help. I am blind. Give me a rupee to buy food; I am hungry."

Ravi and Fido stopped. Then Ravi said: "Friend, I am also blind; and I too am a beggar."

"You are luckier than I am, my little boy," the old man said. "You can walk, but I am lame as well as blind."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Ravi, and gave the old man the one rupee coin he had saved for buying food.

The old beggar thanked him, and suddenly there was a flash of light before Ravi's eyes. He closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, the world seemed brighter. Now his eyes could see some brightness through the darkness of the world. "Oh, Fido, the dream was true," said Ravi. "Every time I do a kind action, my eyes become a little less blind."

That evening Ravi stopped in front of a temple. He heard an old woman crying for food. She was very ill and hungry. Ravi gave her the small loaf of bread he had kept for himself and his dog. The woman thanked him, and now there was another flash of light before his eyes. He closed his eyes, and

when he opened them again, he could see the world, though not clearly. The full moon was shining. Ravi and Fido went to sleep without any food.

The next morning they were very hungry. They walked to the city to beg for food. Suddenly a hen ran across the road, and Fido caught it and gave it to his master. Ravi thought he was lucky to get the hen; for he could sell it and get money for buying food. Then they met a man, who bought the hen and gave some money. But when Ravi got the coins in his hand, darkness spread over his eyes and he was blinder than he had been before.

"This is my punishment because ^{he had} I have done something wrong," ^{he} he thought sadly. "That hen was not ~~mine~~ ^{his} to sell. ^{he} I have stolen it."

Although he was very hungry, he went back to the place where Fido had caught the hen. There he asked a man if anyone had lost a hen that morning.

"Yes," the man replied. "My brother has lost one of his hens. He is very sad, because he is a poor man, and the hen gave him an egg each day."

"I am very sorry," said Ravi. "My dog caught the hen this morning. I have come to pay for it. Please, will you give this money to your brother?" He gave the money to the man, and suddenly there was a flash of light before his eyes. Now the world seemed brighter again, and Ravi smiled with happiness.

For a number of weeks Ravi continued in his new way of life. He was kind and good, and helped many people who were

even poorer and more unhappy than himself. After a month he was beginning to see things; and he could walk without the help of the dog.

One day he and Fido were sitting by a river. There had been a lot of rain at night, and the sky was cloudy. The river was overflowing. Suddenly Ravi heard a cry. A man's voice shouted, "Help me, help me! I am drowning¹." The man must have fallen into the river, and now he was being carried away by the strong current².

Ravi did not know what to do. How could a blind boy save a man from drowning? And then he thought of Fido. Fido was strong, and could swim. So Ravi pushed the dog into the river and said, "Go, Fido, go to save him."

Fido saved the man; but as they neared the bank, Fido grew tired and was carried away by the current². The man's feet could touch the bottom, and he managed to reach the bank.

Ravi ran to the man and asked, "Are you all right? Where is my dog?"

The man said, "Oh, child, the dog has gone, I am so sorry. He saved my life, but I am afraid he is drowned."

Ravi gave a great cry and threw himself down on the grass, "Oh, Fido, Fido!" he cried in great sorrow. "What shall I do without you? You were my only friend." He began to cry bitterly.

¹ drowning : dying in water because unable to breathe

² current : flowing water

The man sat up and put his arm around the unhappy boy. "Don't cry !" he said. "Go home and tell your father. I am sure he will buy you another dog."

"I have no home," said Ravi. "I'm a blind boy and my father sent me away from home when I was five years old. Fido was my only friend."



The man gave a cry. "Let me see your face, child," he said. Ravi lifted his head and looked at the man. Yes, he *looked* at him, and he found that he could see. His last great act of kindness had cured his blindness. He had lost his dog, but he had found his eyesight.

The man said in a low voice, "Is your name Ravi?"

"Yes, it is," answered the boy. "But how do you know it?"

"Forgive me my child!" the man said. Then he lifted the boy and kissed his forehead.

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 Why did Ravi have to beg?
- 2 Who always helped Ravi?
- 3 Whom did Ravi see in his dream?
- 4 What will be the effect of a good action?
- 5 What will happen if he is unkind or selfish?
- 6 What was Ravi's first good action?
- 7 What happened when Ravi helped the beggar?
- 8 Why did Ravi and Fido have to sleep without any food one night?
- 9 What made Ravi blinder than ever before?
- 10 Who saved the man from drowning?
- 11 How did the dog die?
- 12 Who was the man saved from drowning? *was Ravi's father*

II Say whether the following statements are True or False.

- 1 Ravi's father was a good man. ✓
- 2 The goddess agreed to cure Ravi's blindness.
- 3 Ravi caught the hen to sell it for money.
- 4 Ravi pushed the dog into the river because he wanted the dog to save the drowning man.
- 5 Ravi's parents were kind people.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~



5 THE GOLDEN TOUCH

It was evening. The sun was setting in the west. From his room in the palace King Midas was watching the sunset. The clouds were golden in the sky. The trees and the lake beyond the trees, too, were golden in the yellow sunlight. "The sun is touching everything with gold," Midas said to himself. "I wish I also could turn things into gold. I would think of it as the greatest happiness."

Midas was the king of Phrygia¹. But he was a bad king. He did not care for his people. He loved money more than anything else in this world. The only human being he loved was his daughter Marigold. King Midas was very rich. His throne was made completely of gold. The walls and pillars of his palace were covered with beaten gold². His treasure-room was full of gold. Coins, bars, bricks, statues, plates, vessels and ornaments—all made of gold lay there in great quantities. But the king was not satisfied with these. He wanted more gold. He was always thinking of gold. Even his dreams were full of gold. Every evening he spent a lot of time in the treasure-room looking at his gold.

Soon after sunset Midas entered³ his treasure-room with a candle in his hands. He saw gold and only gold all around him. The yellow metal glittered⁴ in the candle light. This

¹ Phrygia : a part of Greece

² beaten gold : gold shaped into sheets by beating

³ entered : went into

⁴ glittered : shone brightly like jewels, stars etc.

sight was pleasing to his eyes and he smiled to himself. "But I am not happy," he said to himself. "How can I be happy when I am not even half as rich as I want to be!"

"How rich would you like to be?" a voice asked from behind. Midas turned around. He saw a stranger with a bright face standing in front of him. He was dressed in a tunic⁵ of fine material fastened⁶ with bronze pins on the shoulders. "Who are you?" asked Midas. "What do you want?" "I have come to know what you want, for I can grant your wishes."

"I want much more gold than I have," Midas replied.

"Why do you want more gold?" the stranger asked.

"Gold makes me happy. More gold would make me happier," Midas said.

"But gold cannot make you happy. If you want to be happy make others happy. Make your own people happy. They are hungry, don't you know?" the stranger asked. "I am also hungry. But my hunger is for gold. Grant me a favour if you would. I want everything I touch to turn gold," said Midas.

"I will grant you your wish. But I warn you. You will feel sorry for this boon⁷ afterwards. From tomorrow on, everything you touch will turn gold. Everything." With these words the stranger, who was a god, disappeared. Midas went back to his living room. That night he was troubled by bad

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- | | |
|------------|------------------------------------------|
| * tunic | : loose outer garment with short sleeves |
| * fastened | : fixed |
| * boon | : favour, blessing |

dreams. He dreamed he was riding in the lake. Golden crocodiles⁸ followed him with their mouths wide open. He cried aloud in his sleep.

He woke up with a heavy heart the next morning. The golden light of the rising sun was falling on the window-panes⁹. This brought the thought of the golden touch to his mind. To test it he touched his pillows and bed covers. They turned into gold that very moment. Midas danced with joy; he ran up and down the room singing and shouting and touching everything in sight¹⁰. And everything he touched turned into gold at once.

Midas ran into the garden and started touching the plants and trees there. Soon it became a garden of gold. It looked beautiful but there was no life in it.

Midas felt very tired now. He went to the dining room for breakfast. There were eggs, meat, cakes, puddings and many other nice things on the breakfast table, but he could not eat anything. How could he? The moment he touched the eggs they became gold. The cakes and the meat and everything else became gold at his touch. This worried Midas seriously.

The door was opened and Marigold came running to him. She held in her hands a basket full of flowers. But the flowers were all of gold. Marigold was a beautiful girl of nine with fair curly hair and wide open blue eyes. "What happened

⁸ crocodile : reptile with a long body and tail, covered with a hard skin

⁹ window-panes : sheets of glass in a window

¹⁰ in sight : before one's eyes

to my plants, father?" she cried. "They have become lifeless ; their flowers have lost their fragrance¹¹. They have lost their colour and softness too. They are gold now. Who has ruined¹² my garden?" She started to weep. "Child, do not weep. But your flowers look better now. Dont' they?" So saying, he laid his hands on her shoulders. That very moment she became gold. Even the tears in her eyes froze into gold. She was a statue now, a statue of gold holding a golden basket full of flowers of gold.



Midas was too shocked for words. Then suddenly he started to weep. "O the golden touch has ruined me," he

¹¹ fragrance : pleasing smell

¹² ruined : destroyed; did serious harm to

cried. "I have lost my only child. I have lost everything. It was no boon that he gave me. I was asking for my own death-sentence¹³."

"Why are you weeping?" a voice asked from behind. Midas turned around. The god who had given him the boon was now standing in front of him. "Now you have more gold than you ever had before. Has it made you happier?" he asked.

"No, it has not." Midas cried bitterly. "I have ruined myself. Please take away the favour you gave me. Please bring my child back to life. I will not even touch gold hereafter. I want to see the world as God created it. What a fool I have been!"

"How could you love the yellow metal?" the god asked him. "I am glad you have become wiser now. Go to the Pactolcan* stream and bathe in it. Bring a pitcher¹⁴ of water from the stream and sprinkle¹⁵ it on all those things you have changed into gold."

Midas bathed in the Pactolean stream. A lot of water turned into gold at his touch. Grains¹⁶ of gold sank into the bottom. (Thus the stream came to have golden sands.) But in a minute or two he lost his golden touch. He brought

¹³ sentence : punishment

¹⁴ pitcher : large vessel with a handle

¹⁵ sprinkle : throw a shower on

¹⁶ grains : tiny hard bits

* Pactolus : Small river of ancient Lydia, West Central Asia Minor (now in Turkey). Famous for gold washed from its sands.

back some water from the stream and sprinkled it on all those things he had changed into gold. Everything came back to life. Marigold opened her eyes as from sleep, and looked at her father. She then looked at the basket she was holding. It contained real flowers now. A honeybee which had become gold in the bell of a flower was slowly waking up. Midas said looking at it, "I have also come back to life like you and the bee there, my child. One of those little creatures is now dearer to me than a mountain of gold."

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 What was Midas watching from his room in the palace?
- 2 How did the clouds and trees appear then?
- 3 What did he say when he saw the sunset?
- 4 What kind of a king was Midas?
- 5 Who was the only human being he loved?
- 6 What was there in the treasure-room?
- 7 Why was Midas not happy?
- 8 Who did he meet in the treasure-room? What favour did the visitor grant Midas?
- 9 What did Midas do the next morning?
- 10 Why couldn't he eat any breakfast?
- 11 Who came to him then? What did she hold in her hands?
- 12 What happened to the girl as he touched her?
- 13 What request did Midas make when the god came to him for the second time?
- 14 How was Midas to remove the golden touch?
- 15 What did he say when he saw the honeybee coming back to life?

II Say whether the following statements are True or False:

- 1 Most of Midas's throne was gold.
- 2 The stranger was dressed in a blue tunic.
- 3 Marigold was a girl of eleven with golden hair.
- 4 Midas said that more gold would make him less happy.
- 5 To test the golden touch Midas touched the fountain in the garden.
- 6 The god asked Midas to drink the water of the Pactolean stream.
- 7 He brought back some of its water in a pitcher.
- 8 A spider which had become gold was now coming back to life.
- 9 He said he also was coming back to life.
- 10 He said he had learnt a lesson.

6 THE FOUR FRIENDS



A rat, a crow and a tortoise¹ lived together near a river. They were great friends.

One day they were standing by the river. Then they saw a little wild goat running towards them. She was running very quickly. They said to themselves, "A hunter² is following her."

Then the tortoise jumped into the river. The rat ran into his hole. The crow hid himself in the branches of a tree nearby. The goat stopped suddenly by the side of the river.

¹ tortoise : a slow-moving, four-legged variety of turtle with a hard shell

² hunter : a person who follows and kills animals for food or sport.

The crow looked out of the branches of the tree. There was no one near. So he called to the tortoise. The tortoise put his head above the water and said, "Friend goat, do not be afraid. Drink our water. It is clear and sweet."

The goat did so, and the tortoise said again, "Why did you run so quickly? What were you afraid of?"

"A hunter was following me," replied the goat. "I have run away from him."

'Now you are safe', said the tortoise. 'Please remain with us and be our friend.' The crow and the rat also came out and said the same thing. So the goat gladly remained with them and was their good friend.

The four friends lived happily together for some time. But one morning, the goat did not meet the others near the river. They waited for a long time for her, but she did not come at all. The rat, the tortoise and the crow became very sad.

At last the crow flew up and looked all around. He saw the goat in the distance. She was in a hunter's net.

The crow flew down quickly to the rat and the tortoise and gave them the sad news.

The three friends talked about this for some time. They said to themselves 'what shall we do?'

At last the crow said to the rat, 'Dear friend, please bite the net and save the goat. But you must go there quickly, or the hunter will catch her.'

'Then please carry me there at once,' said the rat, 'and I shall bite the net.'

The crow carried the rat on his back. They soon came to the goat. The rat soon bit the net, and the goat got out of the net. She thanked her friends very much.

Just then the tortoise came there walking slowly. The goat was very sorry and said, 'Friend tortoise, why did you come here? You are very slow, and the hunter will catch you. I am now free and will run away quickly. The crow will fly to the trees. The rat will run into any hole. But the hunter will catch you.'

The tortoise replied, 'You were in danger. So I came.'

Just then the hunter came. The goat was now free and ran away. The crow flew to the trees. The rat ran into a hole. But there was no help for the tortoise. The hunter said to himself, 'The goat has run away. But there is a tortoise here. A big fat tortoise is better than nothing. I have something for my supper³ tonight.'

The hunter caught the tortoise and put him in a bag. Then he took the bag and walked towards his home.

The three friends now came out and said, 'The hunter is taking away our friend, the tortoise. What shall we do now?'

At last the goat said, 'Let us do something quickly. I have a good plan. I shall run in front of the hunter. Then he will put down his bag and run after me. Then the rat can bite the bag and save⁴ our friend, the tortoise.'

³ supper : night meal

⁴ save : set free

The others agreed to this. Soon after, the hunter saw a goat walking slowly in front of him. He said to himself, 'I shall catch the goat also. Then I shall have a goat and a tortoise for supper.'

He threw the bag down and ran after the goat. Sometimes the goat walked slowly. Then the hunter came quite close to the goat. Then the goat ran away quickly. Thus the goat led him on and on. At last the hunter was far away from the bag.

At this time the rat was biting the string⁵ at the mouth of the bag. The tortoise was soon free. He thanked the rat and hid himself under the grass.

The goat now said to herself, 'The rat has bitten the bag by now, I'm sure, and the tortoise is free.' So she ran quickly to the hills.

The hunter said to himself, 'The goat has run away. But I have a fat tortoise in my bag for my supper tonight.' So he went back to his bag. But there was no tortoise in the bag! He was very much surprised⁶. Then he was afraid. He said to himself, 'I am in the land of magic.' So he ran home quickly. He did not trouble the four friends again.

The friends came out of their hiding-places. They were very happy. They lived together for many years and were always friends.

⁵ string : cord used for tying.

⁶ surprised : astonished.

Comprehension Exercises**I. Answer the following questions:**

- 1 Who were the four friends?
- 2 Why was the goat running very quickly?
- 3 Who first spoke to the goat?
- 4 Why did the rat, the tortoise and the crow become sad one morning?
- 5 Who first saw the goat in the distance?
- 6 How did the rat save the goat?
- 7 What did the hunter do with the tortoise?
- 8 What plan did the goat suggest to save the tortoise?
- 9 What did the hunter do when he saw the goat walking?
- 10 How did the rat save the tortoise?
- 11 Why did the hunter run home quickly?
- 12 Who among the four friends is the most intelligent?

II. Match appropriate items from columns A and B :**A**

- 1 The tortoise
- 2 The rat
- 3 The hunter
- 4 The crow
- 5 The goat

B

- (a) followed the goat.
 - (b) ran quickly to the hills.
 - (c) carried the rat on his back.
 - (d) ran into his hole.
 - (e) carried the tortoise on his back.
 - (f) jumped into the river.
-

7 LITTLE JOHNNY

Johnny was a poor little boy of about ten years. He lived in a small village with his mother. He had no father. Johnny was very sweet and handsome to look at. Everybody loved him very much.

Johnny had beautiful golden hair. This made him look even lovelier. His mother was very proud of her son's long, silken¹, golden hair.

Johnny's mother wanted him to study well. She wanted him to become a great man. So she went to work and earned what little money she could, and sent him to school. Johnny also loved his mother dearly. He worked hard at school and his teachers liked him much.

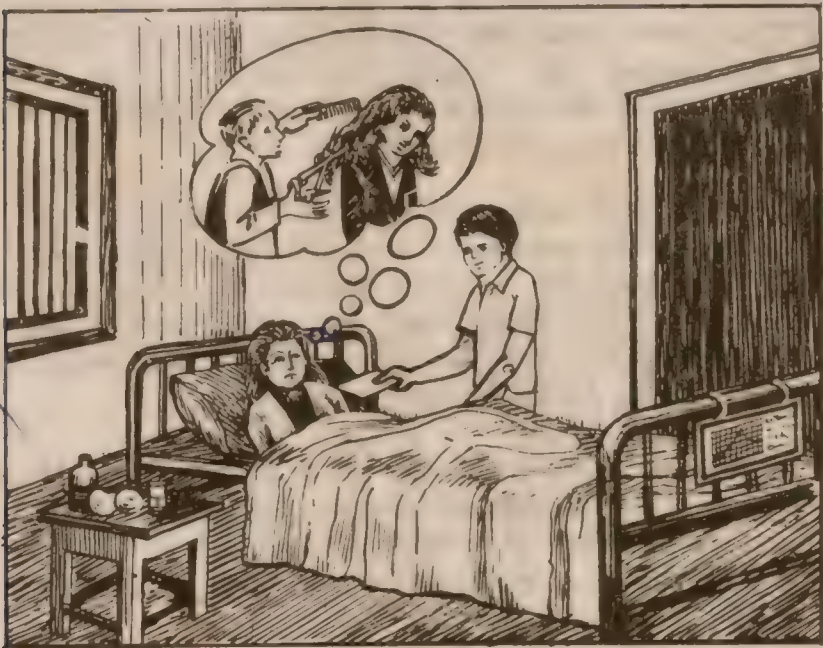
Once Johnny's mother fell ill. She could not go to work. There was nothing to eat at home. There was no money to buy medicines for her. Johnny was very sad. He did not go to school. He did not have any relatives to ask for help. Poor Johnny sat on the threshold² and wept. He could do nothing for his beloved mother.

There lived a poor, kind man near his house. He was passing by. He saw Johnny weeping bitterly. He went up to him and said, "What is the matter, dear Johnny? Why are you weeping? How is your mother? Did you take her to the doctor?"

¹ silken : soft and shining
² threshold : doorstep

"Sir," said Johnny, "Mother is ill and I do not have any money to take her to the doctor. What can I do?" As that man was also poor, he could not help Johnny, but he gave him a good idea. He said: "Johnny, you have lovely golden hair. Go to the shop at the corner. They buy hair. You can sell your hair and get some money."

Johnny was very happy to hear this. He would do anything for his mother. He hurried to the corner shop. He sold his lovely hair to the shopkeeper. He had some money now. He was not at all worried³ about the loss of his lovely hair.



³ worried

: unhappy, troubled

4C He ran to a doctor who was a kind man and who readily agreed to go with him to his house to see his mother. She was lying still in her bed. The doctor examined¹ her and gave her some medicine. He said to Johnny, "Give this medicine to your mother. She will be well soon." Johnny offered him some money for his visit and for the medicine. But the doctor did not accept the money. "Keep it, boy" he said, "I will not take this from you."

Johnny gave the medicine to his mother. He ran to the shop and bought some bread, biscuits and milk for her. He sat beside his mother and watched her. After some time, she opened her eyes slowly and saw Johnny sitting beside her. She looked at his head, "What happened, Johnny?" she asked softly, "Where are your lovely, long curls²? You looked so beautiful in them!"

The boy told her everything. The mother was overjoyed³ to see his great love for her. She embraced⁴ him and kissed him. Johnny was happy too. His mother was very proud of him.

Days passed. Johnny's mother recovered⁵. She went to work once again. Johnny's lovely hair grew. Johnny was dearer to his mother than ever before.

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|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ¹ examined | : looked carefully to find out what was wrong |
| ² curls | : curly hair |
| ³ overjoyed | : very happy |
| ⁴ embraced | : took into (her) arms as a sign of affection |
| ⁵ recovered | : became well again |

Comprehension Exercises**I** *Answer the following questions:*

- 1 What kind of hair did Johnny have?
- 2 What happened to Johnny's mother?
- 3 Why did Johnny sit on the threshold and weep?
- 4 What did the kind man tell Johnny?
- 5 What did Johnny do with his hair?
- 6 What did the doctor do?
- 7 Why did the doctor not accept money?
- 8 What did Johnny do with the money?
- 9 What did the mother ask Johnny when she opened her eyes?
- 10 How did the mother feel?
- 11 What happened to Johnny's hair again?
- 12 Why was Johnny dearer to his mother than ever before?

II *Say whether the following Statements are True or False:*

- 1 Johnny wept because he could not go to school.
 - 2 The kind man gave Johnny some money.
 - 3 Johnny bought some medicine for his mother.
 - 4 Johnny again had lovely hair.
 - 5 Johnny became happy when his mother became well.
-

8 FOUR GREEDY YOUNG MEN

Tipler, Boozer, Roarer and Barleycorn were four bad men. They were great friends. They met together every evening in a hotel. There they spent most of the night drinking¹. In the morning they returned home singing and shouting. Everyone in their town disliked them, for they stole their things and disturbed² their peace.

One morning they were walking along the road singing and shouting as usual. They sang songs and shouted that they did not fear even death. They quarrelled with the people on the road. They met an old man on the way, outside the town. He had a long beard. He was bent with age and he walked with the help of a stick. But his eyes were very bright. "Who are you, young men?" the old man asked them. "Why are you so noisy?" "We are hunters," one of them replied. "We want to kill death. We have come here looking for him. Can you tell us where he is hiding?"

"Are you joking?" the old man asked them.

"No We are very serious," they replied. "We know old people like you know him. If you do not tell us where he is, we will kill you."

"I will tell you where death is. But he does not like people going to him. Why don't you wait till death comes to you?" the old man said.

¹ drinking : taking in alcoholic liquor

² disturbed : changed the normal condition of

“We will beat you to death if you don’t tell us where death is. Take us to his hiding place,” they said. “All right,” the old man said. Then pointing³ to a nearby hill he continued: “There is a stream on the other side of that hill. Cross the stream and turn right. Walk through the forest for half an hour. Stop when you see an oak⁴ tree with a hollow⁵ trunk⁶ Dig⁷ under it.”



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|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ³ pointing | : showing the position of |
| ⁴ oak | : a kind of large tree with tough, hard wood, common in many parts of the world |
| ⁵ hollow | : empty space inside |
| ⁶ trunk | : main stem of a tree |
| ⁷ dig | : break up and move earth |

The four young men shouted aloud⁸ and ran towards the hill. Soon they reached the spot⁹. They found the tree and started to dig under it. They really thought that they would find death there. They were so drunk¹⁰. After about an hour they found a brass vessel in the earth. "We have found him," they shouted. "Come out of your hiding," they cried. With great care the four men removed the lid¹¹ of the vessel. In the vessel they found a great treasure¹². They had never before seen so much gold and silver. The four men worked hard to get the vessel out of the earth. They were now dancing with joy. But because of the hard work they were very tired. They were hungry and thirsty. One of them told the others: "We must eat something. One of us must go to the town and bring food."

But, Tipler and Boozer went to the town. First they had their lunch in the town. They then brought some food for their friends. On their way back Tipler said to his friend: "We have to divide¹³ the treasure into four parts. Imagine¹⁴ there were only two of us. We could then divide it between us."

"I can change four into two." Boozer replied. "I have a plan. We will put poison into this food. Do you agree?" Tipler agreed to this plan readily. They did as they planned.

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|------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| ⁸ aloud | : loudly |
| ⁹ spot | : place |
| ¹⁰ drunk | : made stupid by drinking |
| ¹¹ lid | : cover |
| ¹² treasure | : store of gold and silver, jewels etc. |
| ¹³ divide | : break up; separate |
| ¹⁴ imagine | : think |

Meanwhile the other two were thinking and planning the same way. Roarer said that if there were only two of them they could divide the treasure between themselves. They, too, felt they were too many and wanted to reduce¹⁵ their number. "As soon as they come we will attack them and kill them," said Roarer. Barleycorn agreed to this and they waited for the other two to arrive. They sat there looking at the treasure. They dreamed of great wealth and comfortable living. When Tipler and Boozer arrived with the food packet, they fell upon them and killed them.

They did not feel sorry for what they did. Their greed¹⁶ had made them behave like wild animals. Now there were only two of them and they felt happy. Roarer looked at the treasure and said, "We will have all this wealth. But before we divide it we will eat something." So saying he opened the food packet. He did not know that the food was poisoned¹⁷. He ate half of it and gave the other half to Barleycorn. The poison took effect at once and they fell dead. That night it rained heavily. A part of the hill fell down and buried the treasure and the dead bodies. The old man had directed them rightly. The four men found death at the foot of the tree as he said.

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 Where did the four young men meet every day?
- 2 How would they go home in the morning?
- 3 Who did they meet on the way one morning?

¹⁵ reduce : make smaller

¹⁶ greed : strong desire for more food, wealth etc., than is right

¹⁷ poisoned : containing poison

- 4 What did they ask him?
- 5 What did he tell the young men?
- 6 Where did they find the brass vessel?
- 7 What did it contain?
- 8 Why did two of them go to town after they discovered the treasure?
- 9 Why did they put poison in the food?
- 10 What did the other two do when they returned from town?
- 11 How did Roarer and Barleycorn die?
- 12 What happened to the four dead bodies?

II Answer the following questions choosing the best answer from among the choices:

- 1 What kind of people were the four men?
 - (a) They were mad young men.
 - (b) They were foolish young men.
 - (c) They were evil young men.
- 2 People disliked them because
 - (a) they disturbed their peace.
 - (b) they set bad examples to their children.
 - (c) they quarrelled with everyone.
- 3 They wanted to kill Death because they were——
 - (a) drunk.
 - (b) mad.
 - (c) stupid.
- 4 Whom did they meet on the way?
 - (a) Many people including an old man.
 - (b) Only an old man..
 - (c) None.
- 5 The old man said that there was——in the forest.
 - (a) treasure
 - (b) Death
 - (c) nothing

6 What did they find in the vessel?

They found

- (a) death.
- (b) lots of gold and silver.
- (c) some bones and nothing else.

7 Why did two of them go to the town?

They went to the town

- (a) to get help from their friends.
- (b) to buy poison.
- (c) to buy food.

8 The first two wanted to kill the others because

- (a) they hated the others.
 - (b) they wanted to get their share of the treasure also.
 - (c) they feared that the other two would kill them if they didn't.
-

9 CINDERELLA

Cinderella was a beautiful, young girl. She lived with her step-mother¹ and step-sisters². She was a good girl but her step-sisters hated her. They were jealous³ of her because they were not as beautiful as she was. Cinderella had to do all the work in the house. She fetched⁴ water, gathered⁵ firewood, worked in the kitchen and took care⁶ of the animals. Her step-sisters had beautiful clothes to wear but Cinderella had only rags⁷ to put on. These rags were covered with ashes for she slept in the chimney corner at night. Thus it was that she was called Cinderella*.

One day the King's son invited all the young ladies of the town to a ball⁸. They put on their best clothes and went to the ball. Cinderella's sisters also went to take part in it. They did not take Cinderella with them because her clothes were very bad. "You can go when the beggars hold a ball," they told her. When they left, Cinderella was alone in the house. She was very sad. Tears ran down her cheeks. She thought of her dead mother. "If my mother had been alive she would have sent me to the

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * Cinder | : small piece of coal, wood etc., partly burned |
| ¹ step-mother | : the woman whom Cinderella's father married when her mother died |
| ² step-sisters | : Cinderella's step-mother's daughters |
| ³ jealous | : envious |
| ⁴ fetched | : brought |
| ⁵ gathered | : collected |
| ⁶ took care of | : looked after |
| ⁷ rags | : old and torn clothes |
| ⁸ ball | : gathering for dancing etc. |

ball", she cried. "You will certainly go to the ball. I am your fairy godmother," a voice said. Cinderella was greatly surprised. She turned around. She saw a fairy standing in front of her. "I am the queen of the fairies," she said. "I will send you to the ball." "But I have nothing to wear," Cinderella said. "Don't worry," the fairy said. "Go to the garden and bring me a pumpkin⁹."

Cinderella ran to the garden and brought a big pumpkin. The fairy waved¹⁰ a magic stick over it and the pumpkin was changed into a red coach. Then the fairy said, "You will travel in this coach to the King's palace. But we must have horses to draw it. There is a mouse-trap in the backyard¹¹ of your house. Bring it to me." Cinderella went out and brought the mouse-trap to the fairy. There were six white mice in it. The fairy waved the magic stick over it and the mice were turned into six white horses. Looking at the coach and the horses the fairy said, "Now we have a coach to travel in and six horses to draw it. But we haven't any footmen¹². Go to the garden and bring me six green lizards." When Cinderella brought the lizards the fairy changed them into footmen. The footmen bowed to her. They wore blue and yellow clothes. Cinderella was very happy to see them. But she became sad when she looked at her clothes. "But I cannot go in these rags," she said. "I will give you wonderful clothes," the fairy said. The fairy touched Cinderella's clothes with her magic stick. This changed the rags into beautiful clothes of silk and gold. There were diamonds in her hair,

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|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ⁹ pumpkin | : large, round orange yellow fruit |
| ¹⁰ waved | : moved up and down |
| ¹¹ backyard | : yard at the back of a house |
| ¹² footmen | : servants |

and she wore two pretty glass shoes. Then the fairy said, "You can go to the ball now. But remember, the magic ends at 12 o'clock. You must return home before that."

Cinderella went to the ball dressed in the wonderful clothes the fairy gave her. She rode in the red coach. Six footmen waited¹³ on her. In the ball-room everyone thought she was a princess. She was very charming¹⁴ and the Prince noticed her at once. He danced only with her. Her sisters were now very jealous of her. But they did not recognize her. She went on dancing and forgot about time. Then the clock started to strike twelve. She now remembered the words of the fairy. She bowed¹⁵ to the Prince and ran out of the ball-room. In her hurry she left one glass shoe in the ball-room. As she reached the coach she



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- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------|
| ¹³ waited on | : | attended to |
| ¹⁴ charming | : | attractive |
| ¹⁵ bowed | : | bent (her) head |

heard the last 'ding-dong'. Suddenly the coach became a pumpkin. The horse turned into mice and the footmen into green lizards. Her clothes became the old rags again. But the one shoe on her foot was unchanged. She limped¹⁶ home on it. She reached home before her sisters arrived. So they did not know about her going to the ball.

The Prince became very sad when Cinderella left him. His servants brought to him the glass shoe Cinderella had left in the room. He wanted to find out the lady who had danced with him. The next day he sent messengers¹⁷ to the town to announce¹⁸ that the prince was going to every home to find out the lady. This news excited¹⁹ the ladies. They put on their best clothes and waited for the Prince. Cinderella's sisters also waited for the Prince, but Cinderella was sad because she hadn't any good clothes.

The Prince visited every house. He invited the young ladies to try on the shoe Cinderella had left in the ball-room. The ladies tried it on, but it did not fit anyone of them. Finally the Prince came to Cinderella's house. Her sisters tried the shoe on but it did not fit them either. Then Cinderella came forward and said, "Let me try the shoes." Her sisters laughed at her. "Clear out of here. How dare you come here in these dirty rags, you ugly creature," they said. However the prince asked her to try the shoes. "I have seen you somewhere, but, I cannot remember where", he said.

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|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| ¹⁶ limped | : | walked lamely |
| ¹⁷ messenger | : | one who brings messages |
| ¹⁸ announce | : | inform, make known |
| ¹⁹ excited | : | aroused by joy |

Cinderella put her left foot into the shoe and it fitted her. She then put the other shoe from her pocket and put it on her right foot. Just then the fairy appeared and touched her with her magic stick. In a moment her rags changed into clothes of silk and gold. The Prince danced with joy. He said to Cinderella, "You are the most beautiful girl in the country. I will make you my bride."

The Prince took her to the palace and married her. Cinderella forgave her sisters and took them to the palace. They lived happily.

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 Who did Cinderella live with?
- 2 Why were her sisters jealous of her?
- 3 Who did all the work at home?
- 4 Why couldn't Cinderella go to the ball?
- 5 Who came to her after her sisters had gone to the ball?
- 6 How did the fairy make her coach?
- 7 How did she make the horses and the footmen?
- 8 What happened to Cinderella's rags when the fairy touched them with her magic stick?
- 9 What warning did she give to Cinderella?
- 10 Who did the Prince dance with at the ball?
- 11 When did she think of the fairy's warning?
- 12 What happened to the coach, horses and footmen at midnight?
- 13 What did she leave in the ball-room?
- 14 What did the messengers announce the next morning?
- 15 Why did the Prince visit every home?
- 16 How did Cinderella become the Prince's bride?

II Match appropriate items from columns A and B

A

- 1 Cinderella's rags were covered with ashes
- 2 The fairy waved the magic stick over the pumpkin
- 3 The green lizards became foot-men
- 4 The fairy said:
- 5 The clock began to strike twelve
- 6 The Prince was going to every home to find out who had danced with him.
- 7 Cinderella was sad
- 8 She took the other shoe from her pocket

B

- She put it on her right foot.
- So she was called Cinderella.
- They went with her to the palace.
- It was turned into a red coach.
- Cinderella remembered the words of the fairy.
- "You must return home before midnight."
- This news excited every young lady.
- Because she did not have good clothes.
-

10 ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

There lived once in the valley of Thessaly¹ a famous musician² called Orpheus. Every evening he played upon his gold harp³ and sang beautiful songs. And when he sang, everything in nature listened to him. The trees bent⁴ their tops to hear his songs more clearly. Rivers and streams flowed more slowly. The winds stopped blowing and the clouds sailed more gently in the sky. Animals and birds came in large



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|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| ¹ Thessaly | : | a region in Greece |
| ² Musician | : | person skilled in music |
| ³ harp | : | musical instrument with strings |
| ⁴ bent (v) | : | bowed |

numbers and stood all round him. Lions, tigers, cows, wolves, cats, dogs, sheep and all kinds of birds stood side by side and listened to him. All through⁵ the winter and all through the summer Orpheus sang his songs.

His wife Eurydice sat his side and listened as he sang his sweet songs. She was a very beautiful woman and Orpheus loved her very dearly. She had golden hair and her eyes were blue as the sky and deep as the ocean. She wore a blue dress with designs embroidered⁶ in gold thread⁷. Orpheus and Eurydice were always together and people said that they were the happiest couple⁸ in the world.

But soon their happiness came to a sudden end. One morning a snake bit⁹ Eurydice as she was picking flowers in her garden. She lay down on the grass and wept¹⁰. She knew that she would die soon and so she told the people around her: "Tell Orpheus that I am going to the land of death. I cannot say how sorry I am to leave Orpheus. I will not hear his golden songs any more. Tell him that I loved him as no wife has ever loved her husband." With these words Eurydice breathed her last¹¹.

The death of his wife filled Orpheus with sorrow. He neither ate nor slept for days together. He lay in bed and

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ⁵ all through | : all the time (during) |
| ⁶ embroidered | : ornamented with needlework |
| ⁷ gold thread | : thin gold wire |
| ⁸ couple | : man and his wife |
| ⁹ bit (v) | : cut into with the teeth |
| ¹⁰ wept | : let tears fall from the eyes |
| ¹¹ breathed her last | : died |

wept. His golden harp lay beside him, silent. He did not play upon it. How could he? Eurydice was the music in him and when she left all music went from him.

One day Orpheus decided to go to the land of death. He hoped to meet Eurydice there. He took his golden harp in his hand and set out¹² for the underworld¹³. He travelled for a number of days. At last he came to a high and dark gateway¹⁴. The gate was open but a dog, as big as an elephant, stood there guarding it. It was so black that it looked a huge piece of darkness. Its eyes burnt like fire. It had three heads, six eyes and three tongues. As Orpheus came nearer, the dog raised its three heads and got himself ready to fly at him and tear¹⁵ him to pieces. Orpheus took his harp and played upon its golden strings. The dog stood still, as with magic. Music made it quiet. It became friendly and wagged¹⁶ its tail. Orpheus walked on in the direction of the palace of Pluto, King of the Underworld.

He went on and on until he came to the palace. There were guards at the gate. They stopped him and tried to tie him up with iron chains. Once again Orpheus played on his golden harp. The music was so sweet that the guards stood still and the gate opened of its own accord¹⁷. When Pluto saw him, he shouted: "How dare you come here? Don't you know that nobody should come here until after he is dead? I will

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| ¹² set out | : started the journey |
| ¹³ underworld | : place of the departed spirits of the dead |
| ¹⁴ gateway | : way that can be closed by a gate |
| ¹⁵ tear (v) | : pull to pieces |
| ¹⁶ wagged | : moved from side to side |
| ¹⁷ of its own accord | : willingly |

have you roasted alive." Orpheus did not say anything. He took his golden harp in his hands and sang more sweetly and gently than ever. Slowly the clouds of anger moved away from the King's face. His eyes twinkled and he smiled. (Pluto had never smiled before.) He said to Orpheus: "You have made me happy with your music. Why have you come here?" Orpheus replied, "O King! Give me back my Eurydice. Allow her to go from here and live with me on the earth." The King granted¹⁸ his wish. But there was one condition: "When you go back to the earth, Eurydice will go up behind you. But don't look back till you have reached the earth. If you do, I will bring her back here."

Orpheus agreed to this. He thanked the King and started to go up to the earth. He wanted to look behind him but he knew that he would lose Eurydice if he did. He passed through the high and dark gateway. The black dog was friendly and it wagged its tail. He walked on until he came near to the earth. The sun was rising. The sky became brighter and brighter. He now saw everything before him clearly. He became impatient and longed¹⁹ more and more to see Eurydice. He could not control his desire. As he entered the earth he turned round and looked at Eurydice. But Eurydice had not reached the earth then. He saw a faint figure before him. It became pale and white and fainter. In a moment she disappeared. As she departed she said, "O Orpheus, why did you look behind you? I must go back now because you have broken your promise to the King. Goodbye."

¹⁸ granted

: gave

¹⁹ longed

: wished for very much

Orpheus was very sorry. He sat down at the gateway to the earth and wept like a child. For days and months he sat there. His cheeks became paler and his body weaker and weaker. At last he laid his head upon the earth and fell asleep. He never awoke from that sleep.

Comprehension Exercises

I Answer the following questions:

- 1 Where did Orpheus live? What was he?
- 2 What was his harp made of?
- 3 How did Nature listen to him when Orpheus sang his songs?
- 4 Who was his wife? How did she look?
- 5 How did their happiness come to a sudden end?
- 6 How did the death of his wife affect him?
- 7 Why did he decide to go to the Underworld?
- 8 Whom did he see at the high and dark gateway? What was he like?
- 9 How did he manage to pass through the gate?
- 10 How did he get past the Palace gate?
- 11 What request did Orpheus make to Pluto?
- 12 What was the condition for granting the favour?
- 13 When did he turn round and look at Eurydice?
- 14 What happened to Eurydice as he looked at her?
- 15 How did this affect Orpheus?

II Say whether the following statements are True or False:

- 1 Orpheus and Eurydice were friends.
- 2 Eurydice was a great singer.
- 3 He played on a violin.
- 4 He sang his songs every morning.
- 5 When he sang, Eurydice listened to him from her garden.
- 6 Eurydice had brown eyes and wheat-coloured curls.
- 7 Following the death of his wife, Orpheus neither ate nor slept for days.
- 8 The gate to the Underworld was guarded by a huge elephant.
- 9 The guards stopped Orpheus and tried to tie him up with iron chains.
- 10 Orpheus's songs made the king smile.
- 11 Orpheus did not look behind him.
- 12 Orpheus reached the earth when the sun was setting.



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